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ABSTRACT

This booklet for caregivers of infants and toddlers with disabilities is intended to provide an overview of early childhood development, from birth to 36 months of age. The booklet is organized into 3-month age spans for the first year, 6-month age spans for the second year, and a 12-month age span for the third year. For each level, typical milestones, skills, and suggested activities are provided for the following developmental areas: (1) personal and social skills; (2) language and understanding skills; (3) small muscle skills; and (4) large muscle skills. Contains 14 references. (DB)

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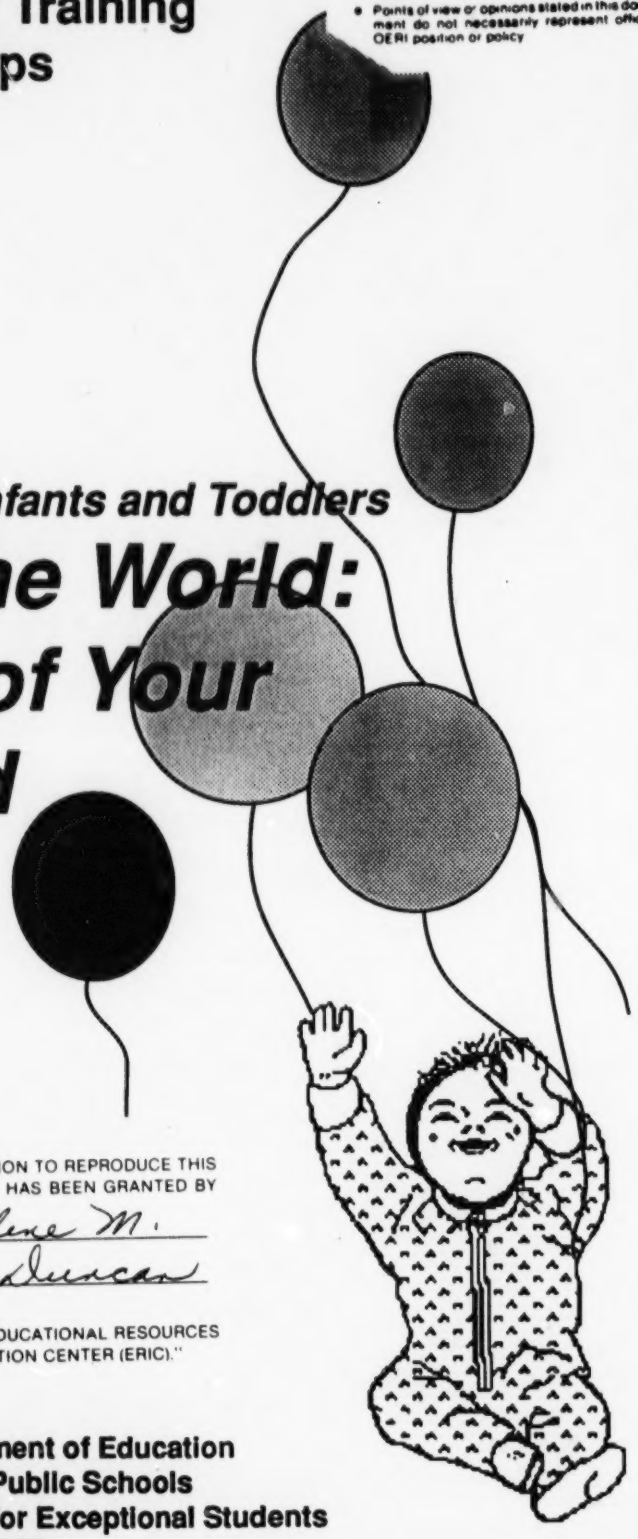
Model of Interdisciplinary Training for Children with Handicaps



A Series for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers

Welcome to the World: An Overview of Your Growing Child

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Model of Interdisciplinary Training for Children with Handicaps

A Series for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers

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Introduction

This booklet is designed to provide a brief summary of normal development from birth to 36 months of age. It describes behaviors typically seen in children at various developmental levels. It gives examples of these behaviors in each of four categories: personal and social skills, language and understanding skills, small muscle skills, and large muscle skills. The booklet also suggests activities that adults can do with infants and toddlers.

It is important to remember that although all babies follow the same general pattern of growth, all children do not develop at the same rate. Children differ in appearance, in the way they feel about things, and in the way they learn. Also, a baby's development may not be steady. The baby may develop new large muscle skills, such as standing and walking, but not seem to develop new fine motor skills for a few months. Then, the child's large motor skill development may slow down while the child's language skills appear to develop very quickly. Because babies are unique and develop and grow at different rates, this booklet should be used only as a general guideline. The sequence of learning is what is important.

When a caregiver knows what a baby might be interested in and able to do next, the caregiver can better interact and play with the baby. Knowing what things a baby is not yet ready to do will keep the caregiver from expecting the child to play and respond in ways that are not yet possible for the child.

If a parent or caregiver has questions about a child's development, it is best to consult the child's doctor, nurse, or other qualified professional. The local Child Find specialist can also be called. Child Find is associated with the exceptional student education department of Florida's public schools and 18 support centers called the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Associate Centers. The Child Find specialist at any FDLRS center can arrange to see a child who lives within that FDLRS region and who may not be developing normally. Call the local public school, FDLRS office, or Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students (904/488-2077) for the number of the nearest Child Find specialist.

Birth to Three Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Smiles in response to adult's smile
- Looks at face when spoken to
- Tells primary caregiver from other adults
- Startles or cries at sudden loud noises
- Comforts to soothing gentle sounds

Suggested Activities

- Smile at baby
- Hang a crib mobile
- Sing lullabies to baby

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Expresses demands with cries and/or other sounds
- Gurgles and coos
- Responds to sound of rattle
- Shows excitement before feeding and anticipates other familiar events

Suggested Activities

- Talk to baby during feeding, changing, and bathing
- Provide many different sounds for baby (music, rattles, radio, bell, TV, etc.)
- Imitate sounds baby makes
- Listen to, watch, and allow time for baby to respond

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Follows bright objects with eyes
- Looks at object held in hand
- Attempts to grasp adult's finger
- Holds objects for a few seconds
- Sucks well

Note: Many movements are still controlled by reflexes

Suggested Activities

- Dangle objects in front of baby for baby to watch
- Provide different textures for baby to feel (terrycloth, stuffed animals, plastic toys) making sure objects are too big to swallow.
- Place objects (finger, rattle) in infant's hand to stimulate grasp

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Lifts head while lying on stomach
- Begins to reach toward object
- Automatically turns head to one side while lying down
- Moves arms and legs

Suggested Activities

- While baby is on stomach, dangle bright objects in front of baby to help baby lift head
- Hold baby in a sitting position so baby begins to hold head steady
- Provide baby with a favorite object to look at in order to help baby roll over
- To encourage sitting, place baby in corner of couch (supervised)

Three to Six Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Laughs
- Smiles on own
- Reaches for familiar people
- Begins choosing toys

Suggested Activities

- Play peek-a-boo with baby
- Let baby look at self in mirror
- Sing simple songs with baby and help baby do motions with hands to the music
- Massage baby's arms, back, and legs from top to bottom

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Squeals and laughs
- Babbles, combines vowel and consonant sounds (e.g., goo, ga)
- Explores objects by putting in mouth
- Chuckles
- Experiments by making sounds (e.g., goo ah)
- Begins to respond to own name
- Begins to show likes and dislikes

Suggested Activities

- Shake rattle beside baby's head (ear) to encourage head turning toward sound
- Continue to talk to baby; name objects
- Listen for baby's sounds and imitate them; wait for baby to respond to your sounds

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Picks up and holds rattle
- Chews
- Plays with hands at midline
- Starts to transfer objects from one hand to the other
- Holds objects with fingers against palm of hand (palmar grasp)

Suggested Activities

- Put object (rattle) in baby's hand and gently pull it to encourage baby to hold on to object
- Put a toy in baby's hand and let baby hold toy with both hands to encourage baby to transfer or switch object to the other hand
- Help baby pick up small, safe objects (1" blocks, assorted shapes)

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Brings objects to mouth
- Turns from back to side
- Rolls from stomach to back and then back to stomach
- Pushes up on arms when on tummy
- Holds head upright and steady without support
- Kicks at objects

Suggested Activities

- Put baby on tummy on a safe surface (carpet, blanket, mattress) and dangle interesting toys at baby's head
- Fasten mobile on crib for baby to kick and move baby's legs to demonstrate

Six to Nine Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Smiles at self in mirror
- Enjoys hide-n-seek, peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake
- Becomes attached to a particular toy or object
- Begins to fear strangers

Suggested Activities

- Hug and cuddle baby often
- Smile and talk to baby
- Play "How Big's the Baby," hide-n-seek, peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake
- Let baby play in front of large mirror

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Starts imitating sounds
- Makes eager sounds for bottle or breast
- Uncovers toy that is hidden by cloth
- Knows own name
- Vocalizes to self when alone

Suggested Activities

- Look at picture books with baby
- Sing songs with baby
- Play hide-n-seek with toys under cloth

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Starts feeding self
- Rakes or scoops small objects
- Grasps with three fingers (inferior pincer grasp)

Suggested Activities

- Provide baby the opportunity to pick up safe foods (cereal, crackers) and feed self
- Let baby hold crayon in hand and scribble on big piece of paper
- Provide many small objects for baby to pick up making sure they are too big to swallow

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Sits by self for a short time
- Creeps and crawls
- Pulls self to standing on furniture
- Rocks back and forth when on hands and knees
- Plays with feet when on back
- Stands by holding on to furniture, hands, etc.

Suggested Activities

- Encourage baby to pull up to a standing position
- Place a toy out of reach and encourage baby to try to get the toy by crawling to it
- Allow baby to stand next to furniture
- Allow lots of room for baby to crawl and explore (supervise)

Nine to Twelve Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Aware of strangers
- Tugs at or reaches for adults to get attention
- Begins drinking from a cup
- Likes or dislikes certain foods
- Demonstrates affection

Suggested Activities

- Have baby sit near the family during meals
- Play pat-a-cake
- Help baby learn to hold a cup containing a small amount of liquid
- Hug and kiss baby often
- Respond with a hug or by talking when baby reaches for you

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Waves bye-bye
- Responds to "no-no"
- Starts understanding simple questions ("Want some more juice?")
- Shakes head "no-no"
- Understands familiar words (mommy, daddy, ball, cookie)
- Looks at pictures in book
- Begins enjoying nursery rhymes and songs

Suggested Activities

- Make puppet from socks and pretend the puppet is "talking" to baby
- Read nursery rhymes and sing songs to baby
- Help baby look at scrap book
- Identify objects with names

- Listen and respond to communication from baby

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Holds own bottle
- Picks up small objects using thumb and finger
- Uses two hands together with coordination (picks up cup)
- Claps hands
- Drops objects with voluntary release

Suggested Activities

- Show baby how to stack small blocks
- Let baby play with the pots and pans in the kitchen
- Help baby put objects into a container
- Let baby play with empty boxes of all sizes
- Give baby cereal to feed self

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Gets into sitting position from lying down position
- Sits down from standing position
- Walks with assistance
- Stands alone
- Bangs two toys together

Suggested Activities

- Play stand up, sit down, lie down imitation game
- Help baby to walk with or without support
- Let baby "cruise" around by holding on to furniture and walking

Twelve to Eighteen Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Enjoys having people clap
- Starts feeling emotions of jealousy, affection, sympathy
- Plays chasing and hiding games
- Shows specific wants by gestures and vocalizations
- Plays ball with an adult
- Becomes attached to favorite possession (blanket, toy)

Suggested Activities

- Provide washcloth for child and allow child to care for doll by washing, hugging, and kissing doll
- Let child help undress self
- Let child start feeding self with a spoon
- Ask child to show how big child is (help child raise hands high)
- Take child on outings (picnic, zoo, parks) and talk about the things you see and do with child
- Roll a large ball to the child and ask child to roll it back to you

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Names body parts
- Points to several objects or pictures when named
- Follows simple commands

Suggested Activities

- Encourage child to repeat familiar words
- While child is bathing or dressing, name body parts and let child repeat the names
- Look at a picture book with child and name objects in the pictures

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Feeds self with spoon
- Attempts scribbling
- Stacks small objects
- Builds tower of two blocks

Suggested Activities

- Play game with small blocks; stacking, lining up, knocking down
- Encourage child to draw or scribble with a crayon or water soluble marker
- Play with bean bags or soft sponge balls
- Encourage self feeding with spoon

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Walks alone
- Throws a ball
- Sits in a chair
- Improves balance and coordination

Suggested Activities

- Allow child to walk up stairs with assistance
- Allow child to walk as much as possible
- Give child a pull toy to play with
- Roll and throw ball or bean bag
- Encourage use of child size furniture (chair, table)

Eighteen to Twenty-four Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Likes being read to
- Partially feeds self
- Independence grows stronger
- Exhibits curiosity and is "into everything"
- Has special relationship with each parent
- Enjoys playing next to another child (little interaction)
- Enjoys touching and hugging

Suggested Activities

- Encourage child to dress and undress self
- Encourage child to pick up and put away own toys
- Encourage child to help with simple household chores
- Encourage child to use both a spoon and a fork

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Makes simple choices among toys
- Mimics another child's play
- Begins to ask questions
- Puts two words together
- Asks for items by name (e.g., "ball," "doll," "cookie")
- Can follow one or two step directions

Suggested Activities

- Begin to give simple directions for child to follow
- Play a simple game of "Simon Says"
- Read to child 5 to 10 minutes each day
- Watch quality TV programs with child and talk about what you see but limit the amount of time child spends in front of the TV
- Answer child's questions simply

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Scribbles and imitates simple strokes such as vertical lines, horizontal lines, and circular strokes
- Takes off socks and shoes purposefully
- Takes things apart and puts them back together

Suggested Activities

- Help child put objects through an opening in a container, and help child dump them out again
- Use simple nesting boxes or cans
- Give child simple insert puzzle to complete (2-3 pieces)
- Finger paint with pudding
- Provide chalk, markers, pencils, paint, and brushes for sidewalk, large paper, newspaper, etc.
- Let child handle clay, play dough (recipe follows), and shaving cream

  1 cup flour *2 Tblsp. cream of tartar* *1 Tblsp. oil*
  1 cup water *1/2 cup salt*
  Mix all together. Color with food coloring if desired.

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Jumps with two feet
- Moves body in time to the music
- Walks up and down stairs with help
- Runs
- Attempts to kick a ball

Suggested Activities

- Show child how to jump holding child's hand while jumping
- Let child listen to music and show child how to swing, clap, and dance to the music
- Have short running races on soft surfaces (grass, carpet)
- Play "Kick the ball"

Twenty-four to Thirty-six Months

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- Interacts with other children in simple games
- Verbalizes toilet needs

Suggested Activities

- Praise child when toilet needs are indicated
- Play "Ring Around the Rosie," "Duck, Duck Goose"
- Play hide-n-seek
- Play dress up

LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SKILLS

- Follows two-step directions
- Takes part in simple verbal conversation (e.g., "What's your name?")
- Answers simple "what" questions
- Uses two or three word sentences regularly (e.g., "Me want juice.")

Suggested Activities

- Allow child a choice of foods at mealtime
- Ask child to follow directions (e.g., "Pick up your doll and put it on the shelf, please.")
- Listen to and talk with child
- Read books for 10 minutes each day with child and talk about the pictures

SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS

- Uses spoon and cup independently
- Helps pick up toys
- Turns handle to open door
- Completes simple insert puzzle (3-4 pieces)
- Unscrews lids

- Builds 6-8 cube tower
- Snips paper with scissors

Suggested Activities

- Provide simple puzzle for child to complete
- Provide child with blunt scissors and paper to snip
- Provide sand, pudding, or finger paint for writing with finger
- Provide many containers with tops to open and close

LARGE MUSCLE SKILLS

- Rides tricycle
- Pushes or pulls door open
- Walks up stairs holding rail

Suggested Activities

- Arrange for child to play games with others such as "London Bridge is Falling Down," "Tag"
- Encourage practice in skipping and hopping
- Provide practice in riding a tricycle
- Show child how to jump over a chalk mark or hose

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